Summary

Collector: Yancy, Roberta

Title: Civil rights collection

Date: 1960-1977

Size: 0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)


Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Roberta "Bobbi" Yancy attended Barnard College in 1959, one of only two Black students in her class. She often volunteered at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s New York office headed up by Jack O'Dell. During her sophomore year, Yancy helped organize, and chaired, a Race Relations Committee on campus. In late 1961, she spearheaded a regional civil rights action conference that laid the groundwork for continued northern student activism. Yancy’s involvement with the Race Relations Committee taught her invaluable administrative and organizing skills that she brought south when she started working as a campus coordinator for the YWCA in 1962. She joined Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee’s staff in 1963, serving as both a campus coordinator and a conference organizer. One of her first SNCC tasks was to organize a three-day leadership training institute at Howard University. The conference focused on the economic exploitation of poor Black southerners. Yancy's role in SNCC was largely administrative, but she also participated in direct action protests in Atlanta, including a sit-in at SNCC's Atlanta office objecting to the fact that women almost always took the minutes at organizational meetings. Yancy also helped stage a sit-in at a Toddle House Restaurant in Atlanta, where she and other protesters were refused service and jailed. The protests gained national attention, and within weeks, the Dobbs Corporation (the restaurant's parent company) agreed to desegregate its businesses. In 1964, James Forman asked Yancy to head up SNCC's fundraising efforts in New York City, where she remained until 1968. She later went on to hold a leadership position at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City. The Roberta Yancy Civil Rights collection contains material generated by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and other organizations. The collection contains historical data; correspondence; reports; writings; speeches by Stokely Carmichael, James Forman and John Lewis; and publications, manuscripts of freedom songs, and calendars produced by the SNCC. Also included is printed material from the Child Development Group of Mississippi (1966-67), Council of Federated
Organizations (1964), Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (1964), and the Southern Education and Research Institute (n.d.); a list of “Black Elected Officials in the Southern States” compiled by the Voter Education Project of the Southern Regional Council (1969); and a “National Roster of Black Elected Officials” from the Joint Center for Political Studies (1971).

Preferred citation: [Item], Civil rights collection, Sc MG 388, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English


Separated Materials:
Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: artifact.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

Related Materials:
Related collections in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture:

Child Development Group of Mississippi collection, Sc MG 265

(Catherine Clarke) Civil rights collection, Sc MG 95

Iris Greenberg/Freedom Summer collection, Sc MG 94

Jack O’Dell papers, Sc MG 497

Robert and Anita Stein papers, Sc MG 138

Ruth Schein. Mississippi Freedom Summer Project collection, Sc MG 113

Creator History

Roberta “Bobbi” Yancy attended Barnard College in 1959, one of only two Black students in her class. She often volunteered at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s New York office headed up by Jack O’Dell. During her sophomore year, Yancy helped organize, and chaired, a Race Relations Committee on campus. In late 1961, she spearheaded a regional civil rights action conference that laid the groundwork for continued northern student activism. Yancy’s involvement with the Race Relations Committee taught her invaluable administrative and organizing skills that she brought south when she started working as a campus coordinator for the YWCA in 1962. She joined Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's staff in 1963, serving as both a campus coordinator and a conference organizer. One of her first SNCC tasks was to organize a three-day leadership training institute at Howard University. The conference focused on the economic exploitation of poor Black southerners. Yancy’s role in SNCC was largely administrative, but she also participated in direct action protests in Atlanta, including a sit-in at SNCC’s Atlanta office objecting to the fact that women almost always took the minutes at organizational meetings. Yancy also helped stage a sit-in at a Toddie House Restaurant
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Scope and Content Note

The Roberta Yancy Civil Rights collection contains material generated by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and other organizations. The collection contains historical data; correspondence; reports; writings; speeches by Stokely Carmichael, James Forman and John Lewis; and publications, manuscripts of freedom songs, and calendars produced by the SNCC. Also included is printed material from the Child Development Group of Mississippi (1966-67), Council of Federated Organizations (1964), Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (1964), and the Southern Education and Research Institute (n.d.); a list of "Black Elected Officials in the Southern States" compiled by the Voter Education Project of the Southern Regional Council (1969); and a "National Roster of Black Elected Officials" from the Joint Center for Political Studies (1971).

Key Terms

Subjects
African American college students
African American politicians
African American student movements
African American women civil rights workers
African Americans -- Civil rights
African Americans -- Education
Civil rights movements
Civil rights workers
Race relations -- United States

Names
Carmichael, Stokely, 1941-1998
Forman, James, 1928-2005
Lewis, John, 1940-2020
Yancy, Roberta
Child Development Group of Mississippi
Council of Federated Organizations (U.S.)
Joint Center for Political Studies (U.S.)
Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
Southern Institute for Education and Research
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (U.S.)
Voter Education Project (Southern Regional Council)
Container List

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee 1960-1968

b. 1 f. 1  Formation 1960
b. 1 f. 2  Staff list undated

Writing
b. 1 f. 3  Forman, James 1960-1967
b. 1 f. 4  Carmichael, Stokley 1966
b. 1 f. 5  Speeches 1963-1967
   Includes speeches by John Lewis, Stokley Carmichael, and James Forman.

b. 1 f. 6  Music manuscripts of freedom songs 1963
b. 1 f. 7  Correspondence 1965-1966
b. 1 f. 8  Yancy, Roberta 1964
b. 1 f. 9  International information 1964-1968
b. 1 f. 10  "Life with Lyndon in the Great Society" 1965
b. 1 f. 11  Reports, memos, and a research paper 1965-1967
b. 1 f. 12  Freedom Schools report and book list undated
b. 1 f. 13  Education 1966
   Student Voice publications
b. 1 f. 14  1965-1967
b. 1 f. 15  Atlanta's Black paper and Philadelphia's Black paper 1966
   Printed matter

b. 1 f. 16  1966
b. 1 f. 17  Calendars 1967-1968
b. 2 f. 1  "Black Elected Officials in the Southern States" compiled by the Voter
   Education Project of the Southern Regional Council 1969
b. 2 f. 2  "National Roster of Black Elected Officials" from the Joint Center for Political
   Studies 1971
b. 2 f. 3  Child Development Group of Mississippi 1966-1967
b. 2 f. 4  Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party 1964
b. 2 f. 5  Southern Education and Research Institute undated
b. 2 f. 6  Chisholm, Shirley undated
   Printed matter
b. 2 f. 7  1963-1969
b. 2 f. 8  1970-1977